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BASIC METHODS AND FACTORS OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FORMERLY BACKWARD AREAS OF THE SOVIET UNION, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

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D

BASIC METHODS AND FACTORS OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FORMERLY BACKWARD AREAS OF THE SOVIET UNION (AS EXEMPLIFIED BY CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS)

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The gigantic leap, accomplished in a short space of time in their economic and cultural development by the formerly oppressed peoples of tsarist Russia's remote provinces, many of which were in the past at the semi-feudal or patriarchal-tribal stage, has been an outstanding gain of socialism and of the Leninist national policy. The leap made by these peoples became possible thanks to the Great October Socialist Revolution and the selfless, fraternal help of the great Russian people and of all the peoples of the multi-national Soviet Union.

The experience of non-capitalist development, accumulated in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries, is of so much greater significance, because approximately a sixth of the population of the USSR represents those peoples which took the road of non-capitalist development toward socialism. Over two thirds of the population of the world socialist system are now successfully accomplishing their transition from semi-feudal and feudal society to socialism.

The victory of socialism in formerly backward colonial remote areas, such as Central Asia and Kazakhstan, is of tremendous importance, since the experience of the former outlying Russian provinces has proved that it is quite possible for the peoples of the East to do away, within the lifetime of a generation, with backwardness, poverty, disease and ignorance, and to rise to the level of economically advanced countries.

Within the short historical period which elapsed after the establishment of Soviet power, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Kirghizia and Kazakhstan covered a road which may be measured by centuries; in their economic and cultural development these republics by far outstripped many countries of the East and West which had been at an incomparably higher level of development at the time of the victorious socialist Revolution. By many major criteria of economic and cultural progress the Soviet Republics of Central Asia can be well compared with the most developed capitalist countries of the West.

Since the Soviet era radical transformations have taken place in the economic life of the Central Asian republics. The latter turned into flourishing industrial and agrarian countries with an advanced economy and culture. Underlying the successes of such an upswing was the emergence of centres of large-scale industry, which played a decisive role in eliminating the economic backwardness of the republics. The growth of a socialist industry meant a rapid rise of the productive forces in these republics and higher living standards of the peoples of the Central Asian republics. Industry became the leading branch of the economy. This was all the more important since tsarism used the backward areas only as suppliers of raw materials and as markets for the Russian merchants and factory owners. The main branches of industry of the present-day Central Asian republics were confined in tsarist times to primary processing of agricultural raw materials. Most enterprises were of a small scale semi-artisan type with obsolete equipment, except a small number of establishments which belonged to large companies. On the whole, pre-revolutionary Turkestan represented an

economically and culturally backward far-off province of tsarist Russia with the prevailing feudal relations typical of many African and Asian colonial countries of today or of those which have recently gained independence.

The social and economic grounds for the industrial development of backward areas, including the Central Asian republics, were the same which contributed to the transformation of the whole Soviet Union from a backward agrarian country into a highly-developed industrial power. The fundamental change in the position of these republics was achieved as a result of the overthrow of tsarism and the landlord-bourgeois system, owing to the national and social liberation of all the peoples of Russia, the liquidation of colonial oppression and feudal relations in the formerly backward areas, the revolutionary replacement of capitalist private property by the people's ownership of the means and tools of production, and the organization of a planned socialist system of economy on a nation-wide scale.

The significance of these prerequisites is especially great in the case of the formerly backward peoples of Central Asia. The Uzbeks, the Kirghiz, the Tajiks and the Turkmens, the most numerous of these peoples, attained their nationhood and embarked on the road of industrial development only thanks to the prevailing Soviet system. It was only in 1924-1925 that these formerly disunited peoples were united as independent national states, the Uzbek, the Kirghiz, the Tajik and the Turkmenian Soviet Socialist Republics, voluntarily joining the other republics on the principles of cooperation and equality to form the single state of the USSR.

Hence, it was only the victory of the socialist revolution in the USSR and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class that eliminated the great inequality of the peoples.

However in order to actually implement the economic equality of the peoples, a considerable space of time was required to put into effect a whole series of measures in the political, economic and cultural life of the formerly backward nations of the Soviet Union, including those in the formerly backward republics. N.S. Khruschov stressed that only socialism was capable of transforming in the shortest possible time a backward country into an industrial one, of doing away with unemployment and poverty of the masses, and of bringing the benefits of culture and education within the reach of all citizens.

Surmounting serious difficulties and guided by its national and economic policies, the Soviet state since the very birth of the Central Asian republics pursued decisively the line of eliminating their backwardness by setting up their own industries, particularly heavy industry.

As everywhere in the Soviet Union, socialist construction in the republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was based on industrialization which ensured the elimination of the technical and economic backwardness of the republics, the development of heavy industry and the creation of the necessary conditions for an upswing of the whole national economy.

The industrial progress of the Central Asian republics passed a number of stages which differed by the given tasks, the scope of work and the results achieved, and which were inseparably linked with those stages of economic development which had been covered by the whole of the Soviet Union.

The first stage marked rehabilitation of the old industrial enterprises, their partial reconstruction, cooperation of artisans and handicraftsmen and

the transfer of some enterprises from the central areas of the country to the national republics abounding in raw materials. New light industries were built, at first on a small scale, as well as electric power stations, printing shops, etc.

The next stage entailed the process of large-scale industrialization which involved the whole country and culminated in its transformation from an agrarian into an industrial country.

Industrial construction in the Soviet Republics of the East was carried out with due consideration for the diversity of local conditions, natural resources, geographical position, transportation, economic and cultural facilities, and for the habits of the population of each republic and district.

The process of industrialization in the Central Asian Republics took the shape of setting up large industrial centres whose nature was determined, by the available raw materials: mining and smelting centres were primarily set up in republics possessing great mineral riches (Turkmenia); important enterprises engaged in the production of agricultural machinery and mineral fertilizers and cotton processing were established in major cotton-growing areas (Uzbekistan), etc. The setting up of industrial centres in the Central Asian Republics was an integral part of industrialization of the USSR without which the industrial development of these republics would have been inconceivable.

In the following stages, during the Great Patriotic War and in the postwar years, industrial construction continued at an increasingly rapid pace, which led to a considerable growth of industry and to a more complicated structure of the major industrial centres and sites.

The all-round development of industry in Central Asian areas, including the production of means of production and even of the finest products of engineering, illustrates the striking contrast to that of the economy of colonial and semi-colonial countries in the East.

Industrialization of the Central Asian Republics and of Kazakhstan meant the setting up of fuel and electric power enterprises, engineering (mostly catering for those basic branches of the national economy in which the particular republic had specialized in the country-wide division of labour), chemical industry, building materials industry, and the development of the light and food industries. Major importance was attached to stepping up the metal-working industry and engineering and manufacturing the basic means of production for all branches of the national economy.

A new working class came into being in the course of industrialization in the Central Asian Republics, great masses of workers from the local population flowed in to industry. This was a great victory of the Leninist national policy. With the help of the Russian working people, millions of workers from among the local population were enabled to grasp rapidly the know-how and work habits at factories and plants, and to master gradually highly-skilled professions.

The progress made by the peoples of the Central Asian Republics and of Kazakhstan was unprecedented in world history; from the former backward economic relations they came to socialism, skipping capitalism. The victory of socialist production relations has led to rapid development of every branch of national economy and a remarkable progress of these peoples' culture.

The accelerated growth of industry in the formerly backward areas was based on the general laws governing the whole of the Soviet economy. The most important of them consists in a planned, proportionate nation-wide development of the economy and the ensuing rational socialist distribution of industry. One of the basic principles of such a distribution leads to the elimination of the actual economic inequality between peoples and the sharp disproportions between the central areas of the country and the former national far-off provinces and an accelerated upswing of the economy, above all of industry, in the formerly backward areas. This represents the material basis of a continuous consolidation of friendship and cooperation among peoples. Apart from this, rational socialist distribution of industry presupposes: bringing nearer in every possible way industry to the sources of raw materials, fuel and electric power reserves and areas of consumption of industrial goods and agricultural produce; complex development of economic areas on a nation-wide scale.

All these principles were realized in the course pursued by the industrial development of the Central Asian Republics.

The Central Asian Republics have a diversified economy, and the rates of development of the entire industrial production are exceptionally high. These rates were planned deliberately with the aim of gradually doing away with the economic lag of the Central Asian Republics. For instance, the gross output of all industries in 1961, as compared with 1913, increased in Uzbekistan 21 times, in Kirghizia 66 times, in Tajikistan 41 times, in Turkmenia 24 times and in Kazakhstan 66 times. Unquestionably such a pace of economic growth is possible only under socialism.

With the general expansion of industry and the considerable increase in its share in the economy of the Central Asian Republics, priority is given, as in the national economy throughout the whole Soviet Union, to the development of heavy industry. This reflects the economic law of expanding socialist production which proceeds on the basis of priority growth of production of the means of production.

Especially illustrative of the dynamics and level of expansion of heavy industry is the growth of electrification which plays a leading part in developing all the branches of the national economy in every area of the USSR. For example, whereas the output of electricity between 1913 and 1961 in the Soviet Union as a whole increased 163 times, it rose more than 2,000 times in the Uzbek Republic, and 337 times in the Turkmenian Republic. Before the October Revolution, electric power was hardly produced at all in Tajikistan and Kirghizia, while at present each of the republics generates over a thousand million kilowatt-hours of electricity.

The expansion of electrification and particularly the construction of important hydroelectric power stations in the Central Asian Republics have as good prospects in the future, as they had in the past, since they have at their disposal vast potential resources of hydraulic power (in this respect Central Asia is second only to Siberia); the cost of electricity of the major Central Asian hydroelectric power stations is the lowest in the country.

The progress in the production of the principal kinds of heavy industry products can be best seen in the case of the Uzbek Republic. In 1913, the Republic did not produce any steel, cement or mineral fertilizers; neither did it mine coal. In 1961, Uzbekistan produced 313,000 tons of steel, 1.2 million tons of

cement and over 1.1 million tons of mineral fertilizers. Coal output amounted to 4.5 million tons, and that of oil to 1.7 million tons.

In the Kirghiz Republic coal mining made rapid strides (3,387,000 tons in 1961 as against 103,000 tons in 1913), and in Turkmenia the same was true of oil output (over six million tons in 1961).

With the substantial growth of the heavy industry, the light and food industries still predominate within the industrial structure of the Central Asian Republics. The bulk of industrial production is chiefly linked there with Central Asian cotton and the industries processing agricultural raw materials. The republics possess many cotton-cleaning plants, vegetable oil refineries, canneries, wineries, sugar plants and leather factories; an important textile industry has been set up, namely silk and cotton mills. This reflects the already existing specialization of the Central Asian economic area which includes all four republics: it is the chief producer of cotton (up to 90% of all cotton grown in the USSR) and silk, as well as the largest centre of pasture animal-breeding.

Both by their industrial and general economic development, the Central Asian Republics have by far outstripped the neighbouring countries of the East. By way of illustration, the Uzbek, Kirghiz, Turkmanian and Tajik Republics as well as Kazakhstan, whose total population amounted to 23 million, produced in 1958 approximately four times more electric power than Turkey, Iran, Afhganistan and Pakistan with a total of 140 million inhabitants.

As a result of the development of industry and the ensuing general upswing of the economy, the Central Asian Republics represent today a major economic area of the country and an integral part of the socialist national economy of the Soviet Union.

The invaluable active help rendered by the economically and culturally developed areas of the USSR, and particularly by the Russian people, was a major factor in the industrial development of the formerly backward areas of the country, including the Central Asian Republics.

The ways of assistance, which is inherent in socialist construction, are quite diverse, and they varied at every stage of the economic progress of the Soviet Union.

The Union and local budgets play a great role in rendering such aid, as a considerable part of the country's national income in terms of money is distributed and redistributed through these budgets. While playing an important part in securing proper proportions in developing branches of the country's national economy and of its individual areas, the Soviet budget contributed to the industrialization of the Central Asian Republics by regularly financing industrial construction. The USSR budget financed the construction of industrial enterprises of country-wide importance in the Central Asian Republics, thus helping these republics to set up their own industries. Important constantly increasing appropriations for the expansion of the national economy and, above all, for capital investments in industry, assigned by the USSR budget, are actually used on the territory of constituent republics, including the Central Asian Republics. Investments of state and cooperative organizations in the economy of four Central Asian Republics amounted to 1,508 million rubles in 1961, as against 360 million rubles in years of the first Five-Year Plan (1929-1932).

The funds of the USSR budget are used for rendering regular aid to the republican and local budgets, which ensures a more rapid increase in the budgets of republics and districts, the most backward in the past.

In recent years, in connection with the changes in the administration if industry and the expansion of the authority of Union republics in administering the economy and financial planning, the total expenditures of the budgets of the Union republics rose still more. Their share in the expenditure of the USSR budget accordingly increased from 23.2% in 1950 to 52% in 1960.

It is of interest that appropriations for industry are being simultaneously curtailed in the other countries of the East. For instance, appropriations for the development of industry in Iran according to the first so-called seven-year plan (1949-1955) were envisaged to the amount of but 19% of all the appropriations, and according to the second seven-year plan (1955-1962), to but 13%. As a matter of fact, even such appropriations proved to be unreal as the first seven-year plan was fulfilled by not more than 20%, while the second seven-year plan, according to the statement by the head of the planning organization in the Mejlis, likewise proved to be a failure.

The Russian people rendered invaluable assistance in solving the problem of training national staffs of engineers, technicians and skilled workers. Numerous groups of experienced engineers, technicians and skilled workers were sent year in year out to the Central Asian Republics to ensure the building and mastering of new enterprises and the training of personnel from among the local population. The training was conducted at educational establishments and enterprises of the "old" industrial areas of the Russian Federation and the Ukrainian Republic. At the same time a ramified network of general educational, technical and vocational schools was set up as well as of colleges and universities.

As a result of the genuinely cultural revolution which took place in the Central Asian Republics, the latter at present have at their disposal numerous national staffs of scientific workers, engineers, technicians and skilled workers. The rates of increase are, by way of illustration, attested by the following figures: in 30 years, between 1929 and 1959, the number of factory and office workers engaged in industry increased 10 times in the Uzbek Republic, 13 times in the Kirghiz Republic, 26 times in the Tajik Republic and 12 times in the Turkmenian Republic.

The number of specialists with higher and secondary education, engaged in the national economy of four republics, was nearly half a million in 1961.

The economic successes served as the basis for the rapid rise in the level of culture of the Central Asian peoples. The number of pupils at general educational schools increased in 1959, as compared with 1914-1915, 83 times in Tajikistan, 78 times in Uzbekistan, 49 times in Kirghizia and 35 times in Turkmenia. By the progress in higher education, the Central Asian republics have long outstripped many West European countries. For example, there are 108 specialists with higher education for every thousand inhabitants in Uzbekistan, which is twice as many as in France. By the number of college and university students per thousand inhabitants, Uzbekistan is far ahead of the USA, Great Britain and France.

Proceeding from the fundamental proposition that labour productivity is, in the final analysis, the major, most important thing for the victory of a new social order, the new socialist system of economy based on large-scale industry,

great attention is given in the Central Asian Republics, as throughout the Soviet Union, to the problem of better organization of labour and raising its productivity. And this is a significant factor in the rapid development of the formerly backward areas.

The successes in the struggle for a more progressive organization of production and for higher labour productivity were helped by the fact that the latest techniques, advanced technological processes, electrification, mechanization and automation were introduced at the newly-built enterprises of every industry in the formerly backward areas; at the same time the personnel, drawn from the local population and properly trained, mastered up-to-date methods of work. Therefore, there was no necessity of spending time and funds on re-equipping the enterprises or on retraining the workers.

A considerable role in the organization of labour and in raising its productivity has been played by the rational distribution, specialization and co-operation of industry.

All this is accounted for by the relatively rapid rise in labour productivity in the industry of the Central Asian Republics. The following examples testify to the rates of this rise: as compared with 1940, labour productivity in the Kirghiz Republic industry was double that of 1960; it increased 1.7 times in Tajikistan, etc.

The expansion of industry and the general upswing of the economy in the formerly backward areas of Central Asia, as throughout the USSR, was accompanied by steady improvement of the living standards of the working class and of the whole population.

Being completely free from exploitation and working for themselves at enterprises belonging to the whole people, the workers reap the fruits of their labour, obtaining ever-rising wages with a shorter working day. As in all Soviet Union industries, there is a seven-hour working day at the enterprises in the Central Asian Republics, and a still shorter working day in the mining industry and in shops and enterprises injurious to health.

As compared with the prerevolutionary period in 1961 the earnings of industrial and construction workers in the Soviet Union have increased fourfold, and, and account taken of the shorter working day, 5.8 times.

The plans for the near future envisage even greater development of industry in all the formerly backward areas of the Soviet Union, including the Central Asian Republics. The successes scored so far in the industrial progress of these areas is an earnest of the major part they are to play in the construction of the material and technical basis of communism, which is now making strides in the USSR.

The above basic factors in the industrial development of the formerly backward areas of the Soviet Union, as exemplified by the Central Asian Republics, may be of certain interest for the underdeveloped countries which have begun to build foundations for their industrial expansion.

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